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PARIS
AFTER TWO SIEGES.

PARIS AFTER TWO SIEGES.

NOTES OF VISITS DURING THE ARMISTICE, AND
IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE SUPPRESSION
OF THE COMMUNE.

BY WILLIAM WOODALL.



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PARIS AFTER TWO SIEGES.



PART I.

AFTER THE GERMAN SIEGE.

"The Parisian is under the impression that his city is a species of sacred Ark, which it is sacrilege to touch. To bombard London, or Berlin, would be an unfortunate necessity of war, but to fire a shot into Paris is desecration. For a French army to live at the expense of Germany is in the nature of things ; for a German army to live at the expense of Frenchmen is a barbarity which the civilized world ought to resent. If the result of the present campaign is to convince Frenchmen that, as a nation, they are neither better nor worse than other nations, and to convince Parisians that Paris enjoys no special immunity from the hardships of war, and that if it sustains a siege it must accept the natural consequences, it will not have been waged in vain, but will materially conduce to the future peace of the world."—*The Besieged Resident in Paris.*

PARIS AFTER TWO SIEGES.



PART I.

AFTER THE GERMAN SIEGE.



It is Saturday, the 4th of March, and we catch our first glimpse of the Prussian helmets at Noyelles. Away on our right lie St. Valerie and the English Channel, and we are still 120 miles from Paris. Our train travels slowly and cautiously on over temporary bridges, and a track which has been hastily replaced. We are thus able to note the contrast between the picturesque hamlets, which look as undisturbed as if they had never heard

of Sedan, and the many silent factories which are paying its penalty. We stop at every roadside station, and the time-tables bear, ominously, the date of August, 1870. Everywhere the invader is in unequivocally absolute mastery. Surely, nothing could indicate more complete and hopeless conquest than the fact of apparently not more than a dozen Germans being left in possession of each place, and there—with the inevitable porcelain pipe, or the alternative cigar—placidity permitting or forbidding, as their pleasure may be, our passage along the chief highway to the capital.

In due course we reach Amiens, to find that familiar Rugby of the Chemin de Fer du Nord swarming with an excited throng. The aspect of the station is startling in its incongruity. Mingling with the crowd of soldiers, or side by side with them, looking on, are groups of idle workmen in blouses, while native peasant women—voluble as ever—jostle their way through the multitude. An officer of Mobiles, from the Pas du Calais, travels in the same

carriage with us. It is a trying ordeal for him to pass through the mass of blue coats which intercepts his way to the refreshment rooms ; and whatever our bias may have been, it is impossible not to feel a hearty sympathy with a people upon whom has fallen such a tremendous humiliation.

As our train passes out of Amiens station, we can see Von Goeben's men, who are here evidently in great force. The prolonged armistice has still a week to run, and it is known that Moltke is prepared, at an hour's notice, to move forward in overwhelming force. We have no later news than yesterday's London papers ; conjecture is consequently busy as to whether there has been any hitch in the ratification of the treaty of peace, and whether the conquerors are or are not in the capital.

Our French fellow-travellers ask the question everywhere, and get contradictory replies ; but at last they learn beyond doubt that the Champs Elysées have been evacuated, and they are much relieved by the assurance.

After passing Creil, we are obliged to diverge from the direct—but now broken and impracticable—line, and to travel by a loop to the west. At Pont Oise, the splendid stone railway bridge has been destroyed, and we descend and cross over a pontoon—women as well as men carrying their own luggage—and so find our way to a train on the other side. By-and-by we are among the devastations, villas, factories, everything in ruin. After a further appreciable journey, long enough to give us some idea of the surprising distance apart of besiegers and besieged, we are passing under Fort la Briche—its teeth drawn, though—and glide into St. Denis. No need to look hard for signs of the times here. We are surrounded by a captured cannon, battered walls, and tall chimneys curiously perforated; and we just get a glance at the indications of severe bombardment which the cathedral and town have undergone. Prussians again, pipes, tobacco, and cigars, *ad libitum*, of course. Stern facts are here decidedly against the Anti-Tobacco League; for

the smoke, smoke, smoking conquerors have bright, intelligent faces, clean complexions, and, as a rule, capital physique. All have a good-tempered, self-satisfied air; and the bearing of the officers is here—as everywhere on the road—singularly graceful and dignified.

At the St. Denis station we have only a slight delay, and not the slightest inconvenience; and then our train passes on through the fortifications, and we are in Paris.

You can't eat your horses and have them; so cabs are rarities. Thus it happens that our first peep at a city so lately shut out from the world is taken from the top of an omnibus. While we wait the regulation time for it to start, the horses are restive—possibly from unwonted nosebag—and the driver pokes at them, and calls them bad names; his angriest thud being when he anathematizes one as a *Prussien*. Near to us is a kindly workman, in semi-uniform, who, with that talent for comedy which gracefully characterizes so many of his class, playfully inquires if we are Prussians; and without waiting for a

reply, he asks if we come from London, and learning that we do, we fall in for a cordial acknowledgment—by no means the only one volunteered during our short stay—of the gratitude of the French metropolis to the English one for well-timed aid in extremity. "*Paris est morte*," mourns our companion; and indeed it has a queer, dead look. Evening is closing in. This is the second night on which gas has been available since the siege; and now not more than half the street lamps are lighted. No gas can be spared for house or shop, or *café*, nor even theatre or other public building; and when we look down from our elevated seats, the little groups of faces we catch sight of through the shop windows are clustered in the softened light of an oil lamp, and have the quaint and curious effect of an old Dutch picture. The eye rapidly takes in other unfamiliar characteristics. Numerous shops in the leading thoroughfares are closed. Almost every woman is attired in black. Many of them have doubtless been bereaved; those

who have not so suffered, dress thus soberly in deference to the patriotic sentiment of the hour. Five out of every six men wear uniform of some kind or other. Every five minutes the rappel sounds, and patrols of National Guards, with most unmartial tread, pass us continually. Disarmed, red-trouserred soldiers of the line, and Mobiles from various departments, singly pass about their business, or in numbers divide their rations of horse beef or coffee beans on church steps or convenient pavement. A string of women, here and there, stand to take their turn for rations, with that docility and order which have made the *queue* a distinctive national institution. Who has not watched and admired the decorousness with which a Parisian waits his turn at the theatre or omnibus door? And who now, looking at these patient women seeking bread, will not remember Carlyle's graphic account of the origin of the tail in like troublous times eighty years ago?*

* "IN QUEUE. If we look now at Paris, one thing is too evident; that the baker's shops have got their *Queues*, or

As our omnibus makes its way, we notice the inscription, "Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité," painted on all the churches and public buildings, by the "men of the fourth of September;" while upon every Government edifice, the word "Nationale" has been plainly and—the number of letters being the same—easily substituted for "Impériale." National flags, British, Spanish, American—above all, and in great profusion, the red cross of the Geneva Convention—fly conspicuously over innumerable houses.

We descend from our lofty station, and presently reach the Hôtel du Louvre. But how has its gaiety succumbed to desolation! We cross the once busy and brilliant court-

Tails; their long strings of purchasers arranged *in tail*, so that the first come be the first served,—were the shop once open! This waiting in tail, not seen since the early days of July, again makes its appearance in August. In time we shall see it perfected by practice to the rank almost of an art; and the art, or quasi-art, of standing in tail become one of the characteristics of the Parisian People, distinguishing them from all other Peoples whatsoever."—
'The French Revolution,' part i. book vi.

yard, and, lighted by a single oil lamp, ascend the grand staircase. Of the many hundred chambers, not more than a dozen are occupied. Two ordinary sitting-rooms do duty for the palatial dining-hall and the famous reading-room. A solitary waiter, who cannot speak English, represents the old polyglot crowd, and attends to our call for food. The familiar sumptuous *carte* is still in type, but our choice is limited to one soup and one *entrée*; and there is no prospect of sweets or cheese. Every floor above the first is devoted to an ambulance; but, fortunately, the folly of aggregating large numbers of sick and wounded in such unsuitable places—instead of treating them in small barrack hospitals, where the air is constantly being renewed, and where no fluffy carpets or hangings toy with and cherish the infected exhalations—has not been manifested here, as it has been in other grand hotels.

We are endeavouring to portray as intelligibly as possible the aspect presented to the visitor entering Paris, as soon as it was reason-

ably practicable to do so, after a five months' beleaguement which, in so many of its characteristics, is without parallel in history ; though we fear it is easy to over-estimate the value of such first impressions.

Paris changes its features as readily as a capricious beauty does her dress, and as completely as smile succeeds to tears on the face of an impulsive girl, or sunshine alternates with shower on an April day. We can simply attempt to tell what we see in the city during the few days that intervene between the close of foreign war and the beginning of civil strife ; and, without particular order of time or topography, we pursue our peregrinations.

Here, then, is the Place de la Concorde, but yesterday in German occupation. The eight statues which typify the chief provincial cities still wear the tight black veils which hid their faces from the foe. The effect is rather ludicrous ; and the Vandals, to whom the soil of Paris was no more sacred than any other belligerent territory, must have found it hard to

appreciate the sentimental inspiration which had succeeded in giving these emblematic cities the visages of niggers. Among the rest is the statue of Strasburg, covered—base, throne, and figure—with immortelles and banners, piously placed thereon by patriotic individuals, and by not less patriotic companies of National Guards, with much oratory and fanfaronading, and much vowing to emulate the bravely but vainly resisting Alsatian capital. It is but bare justice to the “barbarians” to say that, so far as we can see or ascertain, no sacrilegious touch has disturbed veil, or wreath, or other emblem; but that, on the contrary, thirty thousand triumphant soldiers entered a city which was full of exultant memorials of their own prior discomfiture, and left it three days afterwards, not only without despoiling and defacing, but without inflicting the slightest injury. A lady whose elegant apartments are close to the Champs Elysées—within the occupied district—and who looked, not unnaturally, for rudeness and requisitioning, informs us that

she was not even disturbed by the sight of a soldier within the square in which her house is situated. One of our party spent some hours among the German troops, who, with intelligent avidity, engaged in conversation with him, seeking information especially respecting the famous edifices which could be distinguished from their positions. As evening closed in, their arms stacked and supper over, they merrily bivouacked round their cheerful camp fires, and inspired the artist's sketch; while the air resounded with song and chorus, or such hymns as that noble one of Luther's, which has been raised on so many a strange and awful scene during the last year. But the Germans are outside the ramparts again; and now a glorious moon shines down upon fair Paris, which looks bewitching by its light. All the *cafés chantants* and the *jardins* are closed, and the silence of the Champs Elysées is only broken by the tread of small companies of National Guards. Paris has taken to early hours; and, as we wend homewards, we wonder

of how many great cities it could be said that, with its police disbanded and its lamps unlit, we might have walked its streets unharmed, and probably unannoyed, at any hour of its darkest night.

We have already observed the wide circumference of the besiegers' positions. The real brunt of the defence was, of course, borne by the outlying forts. These, sixteen in number, are built on eminences encircling the city, and at irregular distances from it. Fort Bicêtre is barely one, while Rosny is probably three miles from the ramparts by which the city is completely girdled. In like manner, the forts are varying distances apart. Vanves and Issy communicate with each other by a trench little more than a mile long; while from Issy to Mont Valérien is five miles as the crow flies. At this south-western extremity, the Seine emerges from Paris, and about two miles from the walls curves sharply round, and passing

under the heights of Meudon, St. Cloud, and Courbevoye, maintains a course northwards, and so nearly parallel with the ramparts that it was regarded as itself an outlying defence. A line of wooded and picturesque heights, however, commanded these southern and south-western sides, at a distance which—with the wonderful improvements in gunnery—brought the city itself within range.

The south-western angle of Paris is known as the Point du Jour. The river is here spanned by a long viaduct, which carries the circular railway, and connects the line of fortifications. By telescopes we can perceive, as did the curious Parisian during the siege, the Prussian works at Chatillon and Clamart, just to our left, and much more plainly at Meudon and Bellevue, straight before us. We see, clearly enough, the helmeted sentry pacing before the burnt and battered château which, this time last year, was Prince Napoleon's summer retreat.

Shells must have been frequent visitors within the walls at the Point du Jour, if we may

judge by the mischief done. On the street lamps hereabouts, the panes of glass facing the enemy are darkened; recalling to our minds the stories of affliction which befel the unwary inhabitant whose harmless dormitorial candle suggested treachery and signals.

Emerging by the drawbridge, we find a semi-circular earthwork, its concave calculated to afford shelter to the defenders, its convex slope cunningly covered with boards, having nails presenting their sharp points upwards, in a way which must have seriously disconcerted the too daring assailant who escaped the meshes of wire tightly strung from stump to stump across the road. Had the Germans only consented to fight after the best examples of last century, instead of invisibly firing from behind hardly perceptible earthworks, how much more picturesque and heroic the chronicle would have been.

The gate at the Point du Jour has suffered severely from the guns at Meudon, between which and this part of Paris there was no intervening fort. The walls of the *enceinte*,

too, have been frequently hit, the coping has been much disfigured, and the masonry indented a good deal; but no serious injury can we detect, and nothing anywhere accomplished approaching to a breach.

Away on our right for miles extends what was the Bois de Boulogne; on our left, a tract last year covered with houses. The Bois has been cut down, since it obstructed the view of the besieged, and might have afforded cover to the besiegers; and, for similar reasons, where the houses stood is now, round the greater part of the *enceinte*, a plain strewn with *débris*. The saddest consideration is, that generally the loss will fall on individual owners, whose misplaced confidence has induced them to build on these hard military conditions.

The Versailles road leads in a straight line through Billancourt to the bridge at Sèvres. All the way, shelling has been very mischievous. The stone bridge at Sèvres has been broken; but by its side the Germans have constructed one on pontoons, which does duty to perfection.

We follow the downward course of the river, which is here about as wide as the Thames at Chelsea. Opposite us are the sentry-boxes of the Prussians, who are still at their posts; and immediately behind them abundant natural and artificial shelter for men on outpost duty. The line of the river must have been one of incessant excitement hereabouts. Where we are walking, every garden wall speaks eloquently. Chipped and crumbled stone and brickwork, and perforated doors and shutters, tell their own tale of pot-shots at short ranges, and of immortal souls sent to their account by skilled marksmen, who bore their victims no personal malice, firing, it may be, weapons skilfully wrought and perfected by artificers who looked upon the slaughter only as a contest between the chassépôt and needle gun.

Now we are opposite St. Cloud. We see daylight through the windows of the palace. The roof is gone; but the *façade* is unbroken, and we do not yet realize its ruin. The bridge here is also broken; but enterprising

boatmen are busy ferrying over the thousands who have come out *en fête* to see the ruins, and—though they would scorn the suggestion—to look upon the Prussians in the flesh. For our part, it may as well out here as on any other page, biassed, as we may be, either way or neither—they are splendid-looking fellows; and their officers have smart, soldierly bearings, and frank, ruddy faces, which make them look so—well, so English, that we are conscious of feeling at home with them as our Charon lands us on their side of the Seine.

We breakfast among the devastations. Shells have wrought great gaps in the ceilings and walls about us. With much circumspection, we make our way over mountains of *débris*, which almost block the narrow street leading upwards from the river. The walls, which still retain their perpendicular, look as if a moderate wind would bring them down upon us. And yet there are some vestiges of peaceful times apparent. There,

for instance, is a porcelain stove, and above it a mirror, unharmed; near them a cupboard full of cooking utensils, in perfect order; and presently we come upon a butcher's shop, lined with white tiles, uninjured; and opposite it, a shop scarcely accessible among the ruins, kept by a barber, who, with philosophical *sang froid*, is actually operating on a patron. Nor must we omit to note that the church has escaped with slight injury. The impression upon us all is one of surprise and dejection. The ruin is declared by one of our party—who has seen and described Bazeilles—to be as complete as in the case of that unhappy village: and much more saddening, since here the character and value of the property is so immeasurably higher. Climbing heap after heap of fallen building, we make our way up to what was the palace, to find it a mere skeleton. Roof, ceilings, floors—all are gone.

Well-dressed and, it must be confessed, gay crowds circulate through the favourite apart-

ments of the first and third Napoleons, and are busy breaking fragments from such marbles as have not been calcined, or poking among the rubbish for relics and *souvenirs*.

One of our number is finishing his sketch, when a Parisian suggests that underneath shall be written, "Burned by the Prussians in 1871." The circumstance is worth noting, as an illustration of the perverse hostility which Frenchmen seem to feel for simple fact. At the same time, while there is no doubt about the shelling from Mont Valérien of the Château of St. Cloud, there is much conflict of evidence as to the destruction of the town. We are told that the Germans deliberately painted the place with petroleum, and set fire to it, after the armistice—a startling accusation, vigorously and pertinaciously sustained. One thing only is clear to us, that both sides looked upon the place as likely to afford shelter to the other, and at different times both had helped to make it untenable. Let us hope that deliberate his-



RUINS OF THE PALACE.

tory may accurately determine their relative culpability.

As we stroll through the park, the injury it has sustained appears less than might have been anticipated. Unchanged is the private railway station whence, little more than seven months ago, the Emperor departed on his ill-fated journey to Metz. Fragments of shells—clearly from Valérien—lie about the grass. The lofty lantern of Demosthenes has been destroyed; and here, just below the fountains, and close to the palace, is an outpost shelter, the skilfully neat and substantial construction of which excites our admiration. Chairs which have had their day in Imperial saloons have survived to do humbler duty here. Close by, a black cross, bearing a simple inscription, tells how tenderly his comrades have committed to the grave a Fusilier, whose ashes are left to repose far away from the Fatherland for whose integrity he died. Grim batteries, masked and exposed, enable us to estimate the importance of these heights,

which commanded the wide space intersected by the Seine, and which formed the right of the German position fronting Mont Valérien and the battle grounds of Busanval and Montretout. Standing here, it is easier to comprehend the failure of the great sorties in this direction.

We recross the river, and follow its course to Suresnes, above which towers Mont Valérien, looking a most imposing fortress, but no longer a strong tower of defence, for the German tricolour floats over its bastions. The bridge here has been broken down, although enfiladed by the guns of the fort. We now enter the Longchamp; and it is a pleasant surprise to find that, notwithstanding the rough usage the pleasant meadows and neighbouring part of the famous wood have had, no irreparable injury has been done. But nearing the *enceinte*, it is difficult to recognize in the shorn plain across which we are passing the once umbrageous and delightful Bois de Boulogne. For miles the trees

have been cut down, leaving the stumps about two feet only above the ground. In case of close fighting, these would no doubt have been wired; but, as we pass, hundreds of workmen are busy taking up what remains for fuel.

AFTER THE GERMAN SIEGE.

CHAPTER II.

THE heights of Montmartre and Belleville, which, in the brief but spirited defence under Marmont, in 1814, were outworks of great strategical importance, are now within the *enceinte*. From them, looking northwards, the view stretches out over an almost unbroken plain, extending from St. Denis, on the west, almost to Avron, on the east, and probably measuring forty square miles, space for an incredibly large army to deploy under the shelter of their fortifications.

From these eminences, too, may be discerned, some six or seven miles away, the German positions, part of that marvellous

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environment by which 200,000 confident veterans, spread along a circumference of fifty miles, kept within a remorseless ring of steel and fire probably three times their own number of armed but ill-disciplined troops. We go out by the well-paved high-road to Lille, which runs from La Villette, and passing by the fort of Aubervilliers, four miles out, forms the main street of Le Bourget.

Hard was the fate of Le Bourget. Its possession by the French was essential to the success of any sortie in this direction, a fact which made its retention by the Germans a thing not to be questioned, besides the satisfaction which its occupation gave them of annoying the defensive outposts. Le Bourget was consequently the object of furious contention over and over again. It was taken from the besiegers by a sort of filibustering expedition, and held for two feverish nights in October. It was one of the main points of a formidable combined movement on the 21st of December, in which ramparts, field bat-

teries, forts, and musketry assailed the German foreposts with sustained ding-dong without success. And again on the 21st of January, under cover of a fog, a night attack of infantry, following a furious artillery fire, was repulsed with surprisingly small loss to the grim warriors who, behind wall and barricade, maintained by their cool intrepidity the reputation they had previously acquired. As we approach the village, we have to round several formidable barricades, and we intersect the line of entrenchments which connected La Courneuve on our left with Great Drancy on our right. Field batteries are distinguishable also about the plain. Loop-holed garden walls and vicious-looking earthworks testify to the fierceness of the fighting as we make our way.

Here, as in other places, we see that the streets have been re-named in German, and we are aided in our explorations by German sign-posts. Amid the evidences of tragic warfare, there are others which indicate a certain sar-

donic humour. Among them are lay figures which, presenting themselves from upper windows, invited the shots of zealous marksmen without adding to the casualties. We enter a little *estaminet*, to which a poor woman has just returned. She has made desperate efforts to tidy up the place, and is vending bread and beer to the soldiers of the Queen Elizabeth regiment, who, in singularly sober, homely fashion, are sitting on such seats as can be improvised. We join them, and have a pleasant, instructive chat. One, whose heart is evidently with his wife and children and his grocery store at Breslau, explains with much courtesy and clearness the various positions upon the map; and all the men impress us most favourably.

About a mile and a half beyond, the road crosses the inundated country between Dugny and Blanc Menil. Returning towards Paris, we turn off to Drancy, which lies somewhat to the east, hardly a mile from Le Bourget, and which was tenaciously held by the French as

an outpost. It has consequently been heavily battered. The church has suffered severely, but suspended from the key of the chancel arch is a crucifix with its figure untouched; and directly opposite, at the west end, a marble monument, erected in 1865, to the memory of the Countess Ladoucette, has also escaped shells in a way which may, without extravagant credulity, be spoken of as miraculous.

But of all places, apparently, Bondy—between one and two miles further east—has been most completely and destructively shelled. The wood to which it gives its name covered the advanced position of the Germans, and screened their siege works at Clichy and Montfermeil. Batteries erected nearer still not only pounded away at Bondy, but are said to have thrown shells over its head into Belleville, six miles off. It was indeed plucky of the French to hold such a position as long as they did, in face of such a fire; but on New Year's Eve the place was vacant, and the Saxon patrols moved forward and took possession. As we

enter, we find a squad of Landwehrmen drilling by the side of the Canal de l'Ourcq, which had been cut with the intention of restricting the water supply of the besieged city. Of the church of Bondy, the bare walls alone remain; and in contemplating the rest of the town, we lack words to give variety to the description of so much unvaried devastation. The eye with difficulty realizes the extent of material injury which is indicated by what we see before, behind, and all around us. How impossible to estimate the hardship and loss sustained by the inhabitants of this and other pleasant suburbs situated within the military zone! The "pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war" will doubtless continue to fascinate the world; but had the big talkers and bellicose writers, who strove so hard to goad our Government into a participation in the mad strife, shared the fortunes of one of these inoffensive householders, they might have propounded different views. Surely they would have felt, as we do, in looking on at the

desolated homes, and thinking of the bread-winners, with their dependent women and helpless children, penned up for five months yonder in Paris, that war is a damnable thing, about which it is hard to find a mitigating feature.

But *à la guerre comme à la guerre*, these marvellous people are too buoyant to sink in any sea. Here is a gentleman philosophically surveying his shattered château, through the garden of which we have to drive in rounding a barricade; and we pass a cart-load of simple furniture, with a cheery little company walking by its side, wending its way towards the doorless and windowless place which—although they have no word equivalent to ours—has to them all the charm of home. The tiled floors of cottages, which have little else left, are neatly cleaned, as a preliminary to re-occupation; and here are two bright-eyed, merry girls, who have come out to see what is left of their house, and are rejoicing that the stairs are perfect, and that the roof is not beyond

repair. There is some law of compensation here. If a light heart can rush frivolously into war, it can also take from the penalty its sting.

From Bondy, we continue our journey, through Rosny, to the Marne; find the bridges broken, and cross by a pontoon, which leads us directly to the pretty village of Brie — *Petit Brie-sur-Marne*. We are now on the northern verge of the historic horse-shoe formed by a loop of the river, which here abruptly turns, and, after running towards Vincennes, makes a semi-circular curve about a mile in diameter, and then continues in a straight line to Champigny. The two or three square miles of land thus enclosed form a plain, commanded by the forts, and particularly protected by the redoubt sometimes called Faisanderie, but better known as Joinville; below which nestles the little village of St. Maur. Trochu and Ducrot led their hosts from out the Bois de Vincennes, and crossed the Marne under cover of these forts, bent upon breaking through the lines held by about

one-fourth their number of Saxons and Württembergers.

Brie is not unimpressive. There are great gaps where Fort Nogent has banged into it; but there are coquettish villas without a scratch, and where protection has been apparently obtained from the invader by the simple expedient of chalking "*maison habitée*" on the gate-posts. Here, too, the church has gone almost unscathed. Precautions have been taken, valuables have been removed, and carvings and sculpture boarded over; but the curé seems comfortable enough, and with his permission a young soldier is solacing himself at the harmonium in a vestry, and rather warmly resents, as equivocal, our complimentary reference to the circumstance of the place having been so much respected during the occupation by his countrymen. After much diligent exploration, we find a *cabaret*, where an enterprising native is revenging his country's wrongs by vending some unutterably vile red wine to the steady-going Würt-

temberg warriors, who do penance benignly, philosophically consoling themselves with the never-failing pipe.

Leaving Brie, we follow a high-road crossing the wide neck of the horse-shoe and intersecting the battle-field. To our right is the plain, on the left irregular wooded slopes, extending to Villiers and the besiegers' positions. There are indications of the important defensive use which this road served, especially the part of it carried through a cutting.

The Mulhouse railway embankments, too, have been similarly utilized. A mill and its outbuildings on the high ground have been loopholed, and must have had an active time of it, judging by the quantity of cartridge-cases lying about. The fields, too, are strewn with such evidences as mitrailleuse cartridge-boxes, kepis, cooking utensils, pieces of cloth, and knapsacks; nor can we overlook the neatly trimmed graves of the fallen.

But it is at Champigny that we realize the stubborn nature of the fighting. Fort Joinville

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has fired most destructively into the village; and the position under such a fire was so clearly untenable, that it is a matter of surprise that the besiegers should have so gratuitously exposed their men instead of setting their foreposts some distance farther back.

Ducrot's advance, precluded by a furious fire from the forts, drove back the Germans, but only to a short distance behind Champigny; and though the latter must have been immensely outnumbered, they returned, and disputed possession of the village. For two nights, the men of each army held the two sides of the same street, renewing with the morning their fierce musketry fire from opposite windows, and contesting the place house by house. We have graphic accounts, pardonably coloured, from the soldiers, who describe with much vivacity the way in which they had forced a passage by front windows, and driven four times their number out at the opposite side. The scene just now is a very lively one. Barricades are still up at the ends



CHAMIGNY.

of each street ; but tradesmen are making energetic efforts to resume business in their battered shops, and women and young girls are busy making the best of what remains of their houses. The grisettes are the objects of somewhat awkward gallantry on the part of young Saxon soldiers, and are not—as it appears to us—indifferent to such attentions; in fact, there is no little unequivocal flirting.

As we drive along the road towards Paris, the shattered houses are numerous ; and stretched out beside us is the plain where so many had to lie and moan during those long, keen winter nights, and where the various ambulances had such opportunities of usefulness. The sun has set, and twilight is deepening into dusk, as we recross the Marne, under the guns of Fort Joinville, where the blue coats and helmets are now at home. Before entering the thin but pleasant Bois de Vincennes, we turn to take a last look at the meadow-lands and vine-hills, where thousands were left to rest in their last long sleep, while Ducrot—not dead,

and certainly not victorious—retraced his steps, as we are doing, towards Paris.

We could have well prolonged our stay on such an inspiring spot, but our driver suddenly remembers that the gates of Paris close at seven. Making all the speed we can, and passing unchallenged through the last German lines, we get round the palisaded and bristling earthen bastion, and reach the gates just as the National Guards are about to hoist the drawbridge, which, as soon as we have passed, is drawn up, and shuts in the sorrowing city from the outer world.

Sorrow there surely is. Acute privation, anxiety, destitution, death have been here; and we know, too, that there is at this moment much want and suffering—too sensitive and reticent for public rationing—which the English organizations are trying to reach. But signs of depression rarely meet the eye. In the workmen's quarters, people sit at their doors

or about the wine-shops, with the old cheerful expression. Everywhere the omnibuses are crowded; at favourite houses—like Peter's, or the Café Riche—no seat is unoccupied at the dinner hour. The boulevards, as evening promenades, are almost as gay as of yore; and, curiously enough, there are still those odd contrasts between neighbouring *cafés*; and the circumstance of one being crowded, while the other is deserted, can be no longer attributed to the favour or disfavour of the Emperor. For nothing can be more complete and conclusive than the utter abandonment of the Empire and all its characteristics. Of that vast mob of satellites and functionaries who were wont to *viva* the Emperor, the Empress, and the Prince Imperial, not one appears to have the decent fidelity to put in a word to mitigate the universal derision which greets the frequent references to *Badinguet*. The caricatures with which the shops and kiosks are full are clever and amusing, but often coarse and revolting, especially those which represent

the Empress ; and bearing in mind that the people who applaud and buy these prints passively endured the Government for twenty years, we are not disposed to challenge Burke's *dictum* that the age of chivalry is dead.

Knots of political disputants are, of course, more frequent than in the days of *gendarmerie* and *sergents de ville*. Here a courageous speaker is emphatically assuring an excited crowd which encircles him, that while they have been shut up within their walls he has been in the provinces, and he knows that their armies were beaten. We return a quarter of an hour later, and find the same incredulous crowd, and the same speaker reiterating the obnoxious assertion, amid a storm of jeering contradiction. For is it not clear? France has been betrayed ! Her generals have had their price ! All the monarchical powers of Europe, and all the reactionary parties in France, have combined under the influence of a terror lest success should crown the

Republican effort, and seal the fate of all other systems of government ! And so Paris has been surrendered, and the country dismembered, just when victory was certain !

The humour of the hour is to commit violence upon any person who can be regarded as a Prussian. We call to see a lady, and find her home forsaken, and her neighbours relentless—her husband being a Badois, “one of our enemies.” We look in at a pastrycook’s on the Boulevard du Temple, and the young lady who serves us explains that although she speaks German she abhors the Prussians, being an Austrian. But this sophistry is becoming so familiar, that an edict has gone forth warning all Austrians to be ready with confirmatory evidence of their nationality. We hope our pretty *patissière* will be able to make good her story, else it may go hard with her. For here, close at hand, we witness a crowd sacking the shop of a reputed German, who is said to have returned since the armistice to look after the property from which he had to fly on the

declaration of war. He has, fortunately, been carried off with a whole skin to the police-station ; but the crowd continues to indulge its cowardly humour by throwing stones against his evacuated and undefended premises.

To a sympathetic observer, it is inexpressibly painful to look at such infatuation, and to feel that a people which has suffered so much has learned nothing and forgotten nothing, and that blood and treasure have been spent in vain. Officers of the Line are strutting about the boulevards as if they were the heroes of a hundred fights. And in their pleasant haunts, with their beautiful environs in ruin ; with a crushing penalty to pay for past follies ; with the enemy at their gates, waiting the payment of the money ; and with revolution fermenting in their midst—we hear them venting their frivolous and impotent threats of another war which two years hence is to carry desolation across the Rhine.

For though Paris boasts itself tranquil, there

are disquieting signs, intelligible enough to such observers as the ubiquitous correspondents of the English newspapers, some of whom we find confidently waiting a serious issue.

We are at the Place de la Bastille, with its rich traditions of despotic incarcerations, and with its lofty column commemorating and glorifying successful revolts. Make way, citizens! Here comes a company of National Guards from Belleville, headed by its band, and accompanied by its *vivandière*. With the troop, there are motley auxiliaries, men in Mobile uniform, men in blouses, and men with grimy faces, as if they had come, with the muskets they carry, straight from the forge. Newswomen who are proclaiming the *Cri du Peuple*, the *Vengeur*, and the *Mot d'Ordre* subside; so, too, do the vendors of toy tricolours, and of medals in honour of Garibaldi.

The procession makes the circuit of the column outside the railings, then repeats the march inside; then a ladder is placed, and a

delegation from the corps mounts to the pedestal. Another ladder is reared against the column; and one of their number ascends, and places the wreath among the tricolours, red flags, black flags, immortelles, and other emblems which cover its shaft. Then we have frequent but not boisterous cheering. They "*Vive la République*;" they "*Vive la reprise du combat pour la République*;" they denounce somewhat, and vow much; and while thus engaged, another corps, with band and *vivandière*, and irregular allies as before, arrive, and, like those who have preceded them, piously hang their votive garland in its place. About all this there is something suggestive of *claqueurs* and footlights; but we are bound to admit that it is earnestly and decorously done, that there is not the slightest symptom of disorder, and after brief harangues from its leaders, each company returns peaceably as it came.

Let us follow the second company to Montmartre. Here we find the National Guards

barricading, entrenching, and fortifying themselves on the buttes, and avowing their determination to retain and defend with their lives the guns which they say were partly purchased by their voluntary contributions, and which—the treaty notwithstanding—they will not surrender to Bismarck.

Sentries are posted on the slopes and about the various approaches to the hill. There is said to be abundance of weapons and ammunition, and the rebel Guards display much zeal and resolution. The spy fever is now raging so fiercely that adventurous foreigners run no small risk of being taken before the Central Committee, which sits at a wine-shop. The Committee's manifestoes are boldly posted all over Paris. We try to realize the position as viewed by the insurgents. Bismarck's terms may well to them seem intolerable, when we remember how severely they were reprehended in England.* Hence the extravagant

* The ceding of provinces is the most bitterly resented feature of the treaty ; but five milliards is more easily writ-

unpopularity of the ministers who have consented to the humiliating but inevitable conditions dictated by the conquerors. Then, again, the provinces have elected a monarchical and reactionary Assembly; and, although M. Thiers has declared for the Republic as the "form of Government which divides us the least," and pledged himself deeply to its maintenance, the pledge is so contrary to the whole tenor of his political life that it may well be looked upon with scepticism by the Reds, who regard themselves as the normal guardians of their darling Republic. The situation is not a little aggravated by the determination of the Assembly to avoid meeting in Paris, and by the spirit of antagonism which makes the provinces resent the continued leadership of the metropolis, and the Parisians impatient of

ten than realized. In the 1871 years of the Christian era there has been no less than one milliard of minutes! The money indemnity exacted, therefore amounts to five francs for every minute which has passed since the birth of Christ.

the dead weight of the rurals. But there is little doubt that the vitality and tenacity of the disaffection is largely attributable to the fact that for more than six months the workmen of Paris have been living in idleness, receiving their franc and a half a-day, with rations for wives, mistresses, and children. To them the siege has been one long holiday, during which they have had to play at soldiering, and to learn barricade-making under Rochefort, at the head of a special Governmental department.

There has been much talk of inner lines of defences, of exploded monuments, and smouldering ruins, over which the Prussians are to enter in triumph if they dare. And, lo! it has happened that instead of defending and heroically dying in their last ditch, they find their city surrendered—not only without the slightest approach to these extremities, but before thousands of them have even seen a Prussian helmet.

Irritating, all this, viewed in conjunction

with the prospect of speedy disbandment and cessation of pay, as well as the possible relapse into Imperialism or worse.

And all the while, we must not forget, there is in Paris, as in every other big city, an army of outcasts and criminals, which recent amnesties and emptying of prisons have recruited, to whom a period of disorder is a golden harvest-time. Of lawless ruffianism there is an element abroad; of vain-glorious humbug there is no lack; but there is a preponderance of earnest zeal — of patriotic fanaticism, if you will—which, believing much and daring all things, cannot be overlooked.

In the morning we hear the rappel and the tramp of soldiers. Going out, we see in every direction innumerable companies of provincial Mobiles marching out of the city, carrying three days' rations, and those cooking utensils, tents, and appliances which must all through the campaign have seriously overweighed the French soldier. Poor fellows! they ill bore comparison with the Teutons

through whose ranks they would shortly have to pass; but as they tramped away they seemed light-hearted, and doubtless were glad to have their faces once again directed towards the villages and fields from which a cruel conscription had torn them.

The Champs de Mars is covered with tents, and wooden erections continue to hold cavalry in the Tuileries gardens. General Chanzy's men, regarded as reliable, are being quietly brought in, and are camped in their pretty *tentes d'abri* along the river quays; while those picturesque, half-savage Spahis, and hardly less barbaric Turcos, divide the general interest with the sailors, who have a very British, shiver-my-timber, T. P. Cookean appearance, and whose pre-eminent popularity during the siege it is consequently easy enough to comprehend.

The contending forces become daily more defined, but do not yet seem irreconcilable. The Reds demand as they had riotously done in October, and again in January, the election

of the Commune. Dear to the Reds is this dream of the Commune. Like most other watchwords of their party, it derives its significance from the use made of it in the first Revolution, especially during the Reign of Terror, when the municipal government of Paris was absolute. In its abstract form, it simply implies a claim for local government by an elective body like an English town council, instead of by nominated prefect and council such as existed under the Empire. Reserving the right to nominate the mayor, M. Thiers seems willing to concede the Commune; but no attempt is made at conciliation; and the insurgent demands grow, and presently include the control of the city finances, the command of the National Guard, and a scheme of decentralization and of governing France by a federation of the large towns.

One thing is quite clear. Either the Government must leave the disaffection to wear itself out, and wait a favourable oppor-

tunity for compromise; or, if suppression is resolved upon, it must be vigorously and decisively undertaken.

On the 18th, the Government attempts to seize Montmartre! Two thousand men easily get possession; but no proper arrangements have been made for the removal of the cannon.

Inefficiency and irresolution neutralize the power of the Government. The insurgent Guards come to the rescue; the Line—which has its own grievances about pay and rations and incapable leaders—fraternizes; the oscillating element goes over to the Revolution, which, flushed with unexpected success, indulges in the customary excesses. The Government retreats to the south bank, and then flies to Versailles, without even taking the precaution to retain the southern forts. The “friends of order” make a feeble protest, and are soon cowed into acquiescence.

The second siege has begun.



PARIS AFTER TWO SIEGES.



PART II.

AFTER THE COMMUNE.

“We Republicans of the present day have too much of the rebel and too little of the apostle amongst us. The banner of insurrection fascinates us, wheresoever or for whatsover it floats. We have endured so much from the *de facto* Governments, that every protest against an existing power assumes to our eyes the appearance of a sacred manifestation of liberty—an assertion of the right to advance, against the immobility to which we have been for so many centuries condemned. Every daring affirmation finds an echo in the hearts of our youth; not because upon mature examination, it is found to have enunciated a portion of truth hitherto unknown, but simply because, it is daring. It is by such passionate adoration and brief but fruitless enthusiasm, that individuality avenges itself for its long subjection to brute force.”—*Maxzini on the Commune*, in ‘The Contemporary Review.’

AFTER THE COMMUNE.

THE bridge at Neuilly is one of the very few which were not broken as part of the tactics of defence against the Germans. The whole country round about is commanded by the guns of Mont Valérien; and, until astonished by the unlooked-for fidelity of the commander of that fortress, the insurgents roamed at will over the country on both sides of the Seine. But, on the 2nd of April, when the sortie towards Versailles became a stampede back on Paris, and it was discovered that the troops could once again be trusted, the Assembly may be said to have begun offensive operations against the Commune in earnest.

On the 7th the Versaillaise carried the bridge at Neuilly—a “heavy blow and sore discouragement” to the Communists, who must either have given way to panic, or must have been much distressed by Valérien and the batteries at Courbevoye; else, surely, with mitrailleuses behind their barricade, they could have made it impossible to cross a perfectly straight and level bridge like this.

Once on the Paris side of the bridge, the Versaillaise reversed the guns at the barricade, and directed them up the noble avenue. The Commune answered in like manner from the Porte Maillot, and from batteries at the Arc de Triomphe. On the south side of the avenue is the Bois de Boulogne, on the north the Ville de Neuilly; and here Dombrowski's men were holding their position valiantly to the last, unconscious that their flank was turned, and the troops in Paris.

On the day after the city gates were reopened, we visit and explore Neuilly; but we despair of conveying even an approximate idea

of its ruined condition. Several broad streets run at right angles from the avenue; these again are intersected at right angles by other streets. Conceive at both ends of each street,



NEUILLY.

batteries pointed at each other, and the result is before us in stumps of trees and lamp-posts, and in the crumbled condition of everything which intervened. The quadrangular spaces

formed by these intersecting streets were occupied by handsome villas, the gardens well-wooded, and surrounded by substantial walls. Each of these quadrangles has been converted into a fortress. Upon getting possession of the block nearest the bridge, the troops had apparently to begin a regular siege of the next, and each block was assailed and defended in a way of which we have seen no other example.

Every exposed point in the railings or gates has been timbered, every gap in the walls has been built up with sand-bags: and so cautiously has every movement been made, that even with all this shelter the gardens have been sapped, and embankments and trenches abound for protection from the fire of riflemen in the windows, and up the trees on the other side of the street. In like manner, the windows, and embrasures which have been in the houses, are guarded by sand-bags. The extreme care of their skins which is evidenced—especially on the Versaillaise side of the

Rue de Chezy—is the first impression made upon us; and next, we are convinced of the necessity for such caution; for, in whatever direction we look, the devastation is amazing. Shells have penetrated, and have burst great gaps: while in other places, cannon has battered substantial buildings utterly to the ground. But the peculiar feature of Neuilly is the work which musketry has done. In the principal quarter, it would be hard to find a foot of timber, or stone, or brickwork which has not been eaten into, and pock-marked with the indentations of bullets. The ruins of St. Cloud and Bondy have been already referred to as more impressive than Bazeilles; but what we see at Neuilly far exceeds anything which was to be seen during the war or after the German siege.

Approaching the Porte Maillot, we observe the memorial chapel erected by Louis Philippe on the spot where his son, the Duke of Orleans, died in 1842. It stands a solitary object in a desert of *débris*. The Porte Maillot has been

pulverised and the ramparts near give evidence of the destructive cannonade to which they have been exposed. Entering by the gateway, a sad scene of devastation meets our view. Before us is the circular railway, which at this point has been covered by arches turned from iron girders crossing a cutting beneath the roadway. The girders now lie uniformly at an angle of about 45° , and the arches have fallen into the area below; but whether the destruction has been effected by the Versaillaise guns, or exploded on the "inner line of defence" principle, it will be long before it can be restored to its original utilitarian purpose. The houses on each side of the avenue leading up to the Arc de Triomphe present innumerable gaps; but, considering the enormous number of shells which must have fallen within this area from Valérien and the other batteries, it is amazing that the damage is not much greater.

Returning to the ramparts, it may suffice to say that all along the western side of the *enceinte*, from the Ternes to the Point du Jour,

where the mischief naturally culminates, there is utter smash of the most piteous kind. Three months ago, we traversed the same ground.



THE RAILWAY STATION AT AUTEUIL.

Then the villas and *châteaux* of the Ternes, of Passy, and Auteuil were in all their characteristic beauty and coquetry. Then, too, we travelled by the circular railway; and not even the great glass roof at Auteuil was injured.

STANDING here at that part of the ramparts from the Ternes to the Point du Jour, what a different scene is presented to our gaze! Girder bridges and corrugated roofs, *débris* of all kinds, in confusion dire, witness, with the miles of demolished villas, to the vigour of the second bombardment, compared with which the German siege operations were as harmless child's play. Outside the walls, we are able to pursue the saps and parallels which have been excavated up to a point within a surprisingly short distance of the ramparts. How much nearer they would have been carried, how much longer the troops would have tarried while the big guns behind them worked destruction in their front, is matter for conjecture; but certainly the desertion of the ramparts by the Guard relieved the besiegers from a dilemma which was becoming tedious and embarrassing, not to say ludicrous.

But it is time we followed in the track of the assailants; and so we turn from their preliminary operations, and make our way into Paris

by the Trocadéro, sentries sometimes warning us by the way to avoid ground understood to be mined. About us is the position on which the insurgent guns were planted to answer Mont Valérien, but which were surprised by the Versaillaise and directed against Montmartre and other rebel positions. Before us are the Champs de Mars, the river, and—in all her incomparable beauty—Paris herself. We continue our way by the Boulevard du Roi de Rome, and so reach the Arc de Triomphe. The arch must have been hit hundreds of times. A limb of one of the bas-relief figures has been knocked off, and some other mutilations have been effected. There are many places where the balls have penetrated the stone, and others where great black powder blotches have been left; but the architectural outlines are undisturbed, and the monument as a whole is undiminished in its beauty and effectiveness. From the flagstaff on its summit the red flag no longer floats: the troops gained the position and hoisted the tricolour without resistance; and

yet at the base of the arch there are barricades of surprising strength, which would apparently have resisted any possible attack in front. Looking down the avenue of the Champs Elysées we see a litter of branches of trees, of broken lamp-posts, and of all such unfortunate objects as obtruded themselves in the line of fire from the batteries in front of the Tuileries gardens. Avoiding such a dangerous path, the troops, therefore, kept working north, and seem to have met with the first serious resistance in their attempts to penetrate eastwards by such streets as the Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré and the Boulevard Malesherbes, where they were confronted by the insurgents' barricades.

An English friend has apartments at a corner where a narrow street intersects the last-named great Via Haussmann, and at the intersection of the four ways a barricade had been hastily constructed, mainly by taking up the paving stones of the crossing, building a wall with them, covering the wall with earth, and leaving a trench where the earth had been excavated.

To these were added mattresses, and any material which could at the moment be requisitioned.

Here the Commune kept for awhile the Versaillaise at bay; and whatever may be said for the valour of *la ligne*, there is no question about their possession of that discretion which our proverb tells us is its better part. From tree to kiosk, from kiosk to doorway, creeping along the sides of the street, the red troupes make their way with the minimum of exposure. Reaching the entrance to our English friend's apartments, the troops demand and are allowed access to the entire premises. They thus become possessed of numerous windows, from which they are enabled to fire down upon the defenders of the barricade, who return the fire at an immense disadvantage. The latter make their mark, nevertheless, on windows and furniture; and flattened bullets are preserved as mementoes of the fight.

We are assured, on the authority of an eyewitness, of a fact which indicates the desperate

game which the insurgent Guards felt they were playing, and shows that they indulged in no illusions as to the clemency of the Versailles. At this barricade, when an insurgent was seriously wounded, he was despatched by his comrades, rather than be left to become a prisoner. Close to us is a great greasy patch on the pavement, marking the place where one man so stabbed has bled to death. Just below, we are shown the spot where a woman, charged with having pointed out to the insurgents the position of some soldiers, was brought down, placed against the wall, and summarily shot. The story of one barricade is very much the experience of them all. Some were more substantially constructed; some had formidable artillery and mitrailleuses; and in some cases the Federals had the advantage of the windows and roofs of adjoining houses; but, from all we can gather, the number of actual Federal combatants who fought the desperate fight from barricade to barricade must have been a very small proportion of the

Guards who drew their daily pay from the exchequer of the Commune. There are well-authenticated stories of barricades stoutly defended by three men ; and a case in which one man held the troops at bay until he was physically exhausted. But, as a rule, the contest at the barricades was not prolonged. The place from which the earth had been excavated formed a trench into which the dead fell ; and, as the Federals retreated eastward, these trenches were again filled up, and the paving stones replaced, but so hastily as, in one case within our knowledge, to leave the upturned face of a Communist visible as the stone above it was disturbed by a passing footstep.

We continue our walk towards the Madeleine, which we find bears innumerable marks about the frieze and colonnade, but in other respects has happily escaped. Looking southwards, however, down the Rue Royale, we are confronted by a startling scene. Half-way, where the street is intersected by the Rue St. Honoré, there are fallen houses on both sides,

and probably half the street has been fired. It is pleasant to hear it said that the energetic action of an English physician saved not only his own house, but also prevented the fire from extending farther. At the foot of the street there has been one of the strongest barricades.

Before going on to the Place de la Concorde, we make a *détour* along the Rue St. Honoré, and reach the Place Vendôme. In its centre is the stunted pedestal, beyond lie the massive fragments of the column, the demolition of which was decreed by the Commune as being a "monument of barbarism, a symbol of brute force, of false glory, an encouragement of military spirit, a denial of international rights, a permanent insult offered by the conquerors to the conquered," *et cetera, et cetera*. The statue of the first Emperor, which surmounted the column, has been taken away to a place of security, and the bas-relief with which the stone was encased is being carefully marked and removed. The monument was an imitation of the Trajan column at Rome. Its spiral scroll



THE VENDÔME COLUMN.

commemorated the victories of the First Napoleon, in bronze, from cannon taken from the Germans. About the column as a work of art there have always been various opinions; and many competent authorities argue that æsthetically the square is improved by its demolition. But no one will accept as sincere the grandiloquent cosmopolitanism of the decree, or look upon the destruction of such a national monument as other than an act of spiteful vandalism, dictated rather by hostility to the Third than by enlightened repudiation of the First Napoleon. The Place itself has had greatness thrust upon it during the past year. Its mansions, dating back to Louis XIV., have seen many vicissitudes. Ollivier tried hard from one of them to pacify the crowd which called for truth and arms on the first news of the reverse at Weissenburg. During the siege, the head-quarters of the National Guard were here; and under the Commune, it has been one of the chief military centres. Solid and lofty barricades stopped the outlets to the Rue

de la Paix and the Rue Castiglione. But now the Assembly is in possession ; men in blouses—possibly some who aided in the demolition of the column—are helping in collecting the broken parts ; and every spectator has some suggestion to offer, some sapient scheme for its reconstruction.

Leaving them to discuss the relative merits of an equestrian statue of Thiers as against a figure of “France” we continue our walk. A few yards brings us to what was the Ministry of Finance. It is in ruin, and is a remarkable spectacle. The free use of stone in Paris buildings accounts for the fact that in most cases the external walls have not given way ; after roof and interior have been the prey of fire, the façade remains unbroken ; and it is only from positions in front of the edifices that it is possible to perceive the real state of things. But the front wall of the Ministry of Finance has fallen forward, and a great mass of rugged stonework lies across the Rue de Rivoli. The extensive constructional use of arches gives to

the exposed interior the appearance of a Roman ruin. Here, as elsewhere, there are circumstantial stories of incendiarism, of stores of petroleum distributed about the building, and fired at the given moment. These stories may be true. The Federals may have fired it from strategical considerations, or they may have done so in vengeance. But it is certain that, into and beyond this angle of the Place de la Concorde—indeed, into the Place Vendôme, and about such places as the Hôtel Meurice—there rained vast numbers of Versaillaise shells, quite sufficient to account for any amount of destruction. For just beyond, where the Rue de Rivoli joins the Place de la Concorde, is a barricade, crossing the roadway from the angle of the Ministry of Marine to the railings of the Tuileries, of construction massive and scientific beyond compare. It, and others like it would have defied a siege, had not the Commune lost head as well as heart, and failed to guard against the flanking of such positions. A carriage-way has been cleared through, and

we pass on freely to the Place de la Concorde. The statue of Strasburg has just been denuded of her votive garlands, swept up and carried off in the dust cart, while her neighbour of Lille has been decapitated; and scattered about the pavement are fragments of lamp-posts and balustrades. One of the two great fountains has been shattered, but the other is unharmed; and, strange to tell, the obelisk of Luxor, the central object standing in the direct line of fire from both batteries, stands inviolate. Crossing the Seine, the Foreign Office, to our right, and the Palais Bourbon, directly opposite, have been damaged, but not seriously, by balls. But turning down the Quai d'Orsay, the three great public buildings which front the Tuileries gardens—the Palace of the Legion of Honour, the Exchequer, and the Bank of Deposit—have little more than their walls remaining. The Rue de Lille and the Rue du Bac are piteous lines of ruin; for here, as in other adjacent parts of the Quartier St. Germain, there has been furious work. Probably, the

resistance offered by the Federals on this side was more stubborn than elsewhere; but much destruction may no doubt be set down to their antipathy to the aristocratic traditions and Bourbon partialities of the locality.

Farther up the river, one of the picturesque round towers of the Conciergerie has succumbed to the flames; but, happily, prompt measures saved a considerable part of the Palace of Justice. The exquisite Sainte Chapelle, just behind, is absolutely untouched. One of Merryweather's London steam fire engines, which was in Paris during the German siege, was happily available in time to prevent the flames reaching the gilded shrine of St. Louis. Incendiarism has, however, triumphed at the Prefecture of Police. Notre Dame and the Pantheon participated in the good fortune which attended the churches everywhere; and the Sorbonne and Luxembourg have only partially suffered. We return, and recross the river by the Pont du Carrousel. Entering the great square, we have before us, in all its

stupendous reality, the wreck of the Tuileries. The wing nearest the river retains the outlines of its Mansard roof; but the centre pavilion, and the whole range round to the archway by which we pass to the Rue de Rivoli, is reduced to the bare walls. The feeble-looking fire engines are pumping on the embers, from which smoke is still arising. We look to the Louvre with a glad exclamation of relief, qualified only by the contemplation of the portion in which the library was housed, where the flames have triumphed. The Palais Royal, too, has been destroyed; though the cafés, shops, and theatres surrounding the well-known gardens behind remain uninjured, having been preserved, it is said, by the exceptional energy of the tenants in themselves taking measures to restrain and localize the fire.

Following the Rue de Rivoli eastward, we arrive at the point where it is intersected by the Boulevard Sebastopol. Upon many strange scenes has this old tower of St. Jacques looked down. It must have witnessed the Massacre

of St. Bartholomew, and the bloody work of the guillotine in the Place de Gréve. It must have seen revolutions and restorations, Bourbons and Orleanists, consulates, empires, monarchies, and republics ; and, surviving the destruction of the Church to which it was attached, and its humiliation as a shot tower, it has lived to be utilised by Hausmann, and to have at its feet one of the prettiest gardens in Paris. Here the pleasant shout of children enlivened without disturbing the scene upon which the old would gaze while spending the leisure which a Parisian apparently never lacks. But St. Bartholomew and the Reign of Terror were hardly sadder times than these ; for at the railings, the gates being locked and guarded, are anxious women peering in, and, possessed of some slight clue, are craving for further intelligence as to lost dear ones. For the trim flower beds have been opened to receive hundreds of Federals, marched straight from the barricades, summarily shot, and their corpses hastily huddled under the soil. Grim

and misanthropic surely the old tower will grow as it thinks of the children at its feet, and of the bloody storm which has raged around its base.

Close at hand, the Théâtre Lyrique is a shell, and the shops and cafés hereabouts have suffered fearfully. But of all the ruins, none will contest the palm with the Hôtel de Ville. Its interior is utterly consumed. Its skyline is jagged, and much of the exterior is blackened with smoke, or fiercely calcined. Some of the many statues which have occupied niches in the façades have succumbed; others are slightly, very many not at all injured. The bas-relief of Henry IV. is gone—the work of the iconoclasts. But probably no building ever displayed in its ruin so many features which recall its charm, or which make us feel that we have insufficiently valued in life the beauty which confronts us so touchingly in death. For of that Renaissance school which has been honourably known as French, and which has within the last few years been much emu-

lated in England, we can hardly imagine a more perfect example than this. Nor does the eye linger about its beauty of form, more than the mind travels over the wondrous historical incidents of which it has been the stage. From one window Louis XVI., wearing the Phrygian cap, endeavoured to propitiate the mob of the first Revolution. From another, Lamartine braved and subdued the unruly spirits of '48. We hear people who stand beside us dolefully regretting the time when Hausmann gave his receptions and incomparable balls, in its saloons, as Prefect under the Empire. And we are reminded that here the Government of National Defence proclaimed itself on the 4th of September; here it was made prisoner the next month; here the Commune was declared; and here for the last two months, what a chaos—"where all deliberate and none obey"—has reigned! Here, too, as the tide of the Commune's fortune ebbed, the fierce fighting went on from behind the strong barricades in the Place

de Gréve. The din of cannon, the strange whirring sound of mitrailleuse, and incessant bang bang of musketry, resounding through an atmosphere lurid and murky, as the flames contended with the merciful rain, made a hell upon earth; while dread uncertainty possessed the citizens, one moment in danger from the desperate violence of the insurgents, and the next from the retaliatory excesses of the Government troops. The panic about petroleum; the insane credulity which, at such a time, receives with unquestioning faith the wildest horrors; the fear of being denounced prompting to the denunciation and summary execution of some one, any one else, all these conditions we try to realize as we stand where the Commune men retreated upon the Hôtel de Ville, and imagine the scene when they were subsequently driven back into the burning buildings by their remorseless and infuriated conquerors. The Parisians have a theory that whoever holds the Hôtel de Ville is supreme in France. It is a sorry tradition now; but even

this desolate ruin may be in some degree a type.

Pursuing our way, we find marks of firing on almost every building along the Rue St. Antoine. The Protestant church there has been a good deal injured. Reaching the Place de la Bastille, there have been barricades, and there are ruined buildings; and near at hand is the Granary of Abundance, which has been a tremendous fire. All along the boulevards there are the evidences of fierce street fighting; but about the Château d'Eau there has been a stubborn and sustained, though unsuccessful, resistance; the fountains are shattered, and bombs have wrought destruction all around. Following in the track of the retreating Federals, we reach the outer ring of boulevards, at the point where the Canal de l'Ourcq terminates in the docks at La Villette. Fire has done its wicked work here; and, as at the Granaries, merchandise of great value has been destroyed. Smoke is still rising as we pass on our way up to the Buttes Chaumont.

We are now in Belleville which has long been regarded as the most turbulent part of Paris, and we are prepared to find a repressed but fierce and vengeful people. We do find red-trousered sentries and patrols, and we can see reserves of the line. As we near the Buttes, we find a trench partially filled in with earth and quick lime, and close at hand deal coffins, with lids left loose for the identification of the slain men therein. We find, too, on our way up to the positions from which the cannon has been removed, a heap just hastily covered over, and smelling most repulsively; and we look down into the quarry, which Hausmann transformed from a sanctuary for ruffians and city refuse into one of the most picturesque parks in Europe, and there the troops are guarding such insurgents as have not been shot, and whose turn for Satory has not yet come. A day or two ago, the women up here hissed at and execrated the soldiers as they passed before their houses; and well they might. But who shall argue from yesterday

what Paris shall be to-day, or predict from to-day what it will do to-morrow?

We think we see a subdued look here and there, but nothing which could lead a stranger to suppose that a new, and to them auspicious, era had come to a bloody end; that the Commune, which in their eyes was the harbinger of abundant food, the promise of little work and large wages—had expired in flames; and that the fathers and brothers, the husbands and sweethearts, aye, and the wives and sisters doubtless, of these very people had, within a week past, died as martyrs on the funeral pyre! For here, on a patch of open ground, is a little fair; and there are swing boats, in one of which are two young women, and opposite them, in gay companionship, one of the hated soldiers; while close by a lively crowd is listening to a showman, who is discoursing most entertaining buffoonery from the platform in front of his little theatre; and meanwhile the sentries carry long steel rods for probing mattresses and other places of concealment,

and Communists are being hotly searched for, and prisoners marched off to Versailles. For happily there is an end to the executions without trial, and there is even a reaction, and people begin to protest against excesses which so recently were applauded as heroic vigour.

Paris looks surpassingly beautiful from these heights ; and out yonder, on the northern plain, is the foreigner looking on, a puzzled spectator of this the strangest and saddest drama the world has ever seen. Had the Germans not lent their aid by permitting M'Mahon's men to enter by the northern gates, and so surprise these heights and Montmartre in flank, their capture would have cost the Government a fearful price ; or had such naturally strong positions been defended with the courage and pertinacity we saw proofs of at Neuilly, the struggle would have been much more protracted, and the issue doubtful.

But as we regain the principal boulevards, we find every street a vista of tri-coloured flags. The men are unstopping the ventilating grids

which had been plastered up against the *pétroleuses* ; the barricades are rapidly disappearing ; 10,000 workmen are said to have been set to work in relaying the pavement, which probably most of them had had a hand in taking up ; the shops are open, the cafés are themselves again, and Paris is once more declared *tranquil*.

Englishmen have not been uninterested observers in the events we have here been reviewing. Looking back in our own history, we have to retrace more than two centuries for a parallel ; and although then we had contending armies, a great rebellion, and a monarch brought to the block, we remember with pride that our revolutionists were God-fearing men, who contended for the authority of laws and parliaments. In 1688 our forefathers rose again in protest against arbitrary power, and banished the Stuarts for ever. Since then the fabric of our liberties has grown—"from precedent to

precedent."—by the slow and sure development of public opinion and constitutional reform.

In judging French convulsions, it is important to bear in mind the difference in their traditions. And whatever may be thought of 1788, 1830, or 1848, it must be conceded that for this Communist revolution there was no sufficient justification. Universal suffrage was in vogue, a republican government in power; and it is intolerable that a people outvoted at the ballot-box should appeal to arms, save against unequivocal oppression. But then it must be remembered that twenty years of enervating Cæsarism had left the French people mere infants in political knowledge.

Whatever truth there may be in Mr. Disraeli's axiom, that England is governed by rhetoric rather than logic, it is undoubtedly true of modern France. Windy proclamations and specious epigrams have a weight with the people, which to us seems ridiculous. Nor must we forget their passion for classic reproductions. Thus it happens that there was a

charm in the traditions of the Numantines who destroyed their city rather than allow it to cover the invader ; and, in like manner, Moscow was cited as a patriotic example, and the parallel was sufficiently obvious. On the resistless approach of Napoleon, in 1812, the governor withdrew the fire-engines, and prepared what Alison describes "as a sublime effort of patriotic devotion ;" and the burning of Moscow will continue to be chronicled among the most heroic deeds in history. Beaten at the poll, the Southern states of America confederated, and appealed to arms ; and, doubtless, if they had made Richmond a Moscow, they would not have wanted admirers or apologists. And so in Paris, beaten like rats into their last holes, surrendering with their lives the cause on which these misguided men had staked their fortunes, receiving no quarter, there was to them a sentimental sublimity in reducing to a common ruin with themselves the monuments of the power against which they had contended.

For the murder of the hostages, there is no

extenuation. The savagery has its parallel only in the acts of the brigands at Marathon; and it will be conceded that, in either case, reasonable statesmanship might have saved valuable lives.

There is a God that ruleth in the affairs of men, but it is not for us to interpret His dealings. Poor bleeding France has had her follies and her vices, and is paying dearly for them. She has long yielded a nominal deference to a system of priestcraft which has given a servile support to despotism; and, in her spasmodic uprisings, she has ostentatiously adopted a code of blasphemy and infidelity equally irrational. Her want of the common sense submission to the constitutional decision of a majority—which, with all our faults, is never wanting in Englishmen—has plunged France into the most hopeless complications; and her national vanity and passion for military glory have been, time after time, will-o'-the-wisps to lure her to bankruptcy. Is there no lesson for Englishmen, and have we no province but that of censor?

We have in our midst lawless and dangerous classes, which demand all the thought of the statesman and philanthropist. We too have our uneducated and very partially educated classes, which call for machinery greatly in excess of anything now in existence. Nor are there wanting among us other phases of danger, to which alarmists may well point the finger of caution, and which we shall do wisely to combat with zealously. But, happily, there is in dear old England a substratum of common sense, a solidity of character, a reverence for law and order, and a capacity for self-government, which leaves no dangerous problem outside the range of constitutional remedy.

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